

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00864 051316Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 BIB-01 /031 W
-----051319Z 066850 /53

R 051145Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2391
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSULATE MUNICH
USMISSION US BERLIN UNN
USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRAGUE 0864

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PROP, CA
SUBJECT: SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON RADIO FREE EUROPE OUTPUT

REF: STATE 51717

1. SUMMARY. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT RFE'S NEWS BROADCASTS ARE EXCELLENT AND THAT MANY OF ITS OTHER PROGRAMS ARE VERY GOOD, WE DETECT PREOCCUPATION WITH EXPLICIT REFUTATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA WHICH LENDS A NEGATIVE, POLEMICAL NOTE TO MUCH OF REF'S MATERIAL. WE SUGGEST THAT RFE ADOPT A MORE POSITIVE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH AND THAT IT ATTEMPT TO BROADEN ITS AUDIENCE THROUGH MORE IMAGINATIVE PROGRAMMING.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 00864 051316Z

2. BACKGROUND. IN PREPARATION FOR THIS REPORT, EMBASSY REVIEWED RFE SCRIPTS FOR NOV. 22-24 AND BROADCAST ANALYSES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PERIOD SINCE THE LAST REPORT.

3. PROGRAM CONTENT - PLUSES. RFE'S OBJECTIVE NEWS

BROADCASTS CONTINUE TO BE ITS STRONGEST ASSET. THE PRESENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS IS QUITE GOOD, AND WE WISH TO COMMEND RFE FOR ITS FACTUAL REPORTING (AS OPPOSED TO ITS COMMENTARY, WHICH OCCASIONALLY APPEARED TO LOSE ITS BALANCE - PARTICULARLY AFTER JAN PATOCKA'S DEATH) ON THE CHARTER 77 ISSUE. SOME OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAMS ALSO DESERVE HIGH PRAISE - E.G., THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO SERIES AND THE SHOW ON ALEXANDER CALDER. IN GENERAL, WE BELIEVE THAT RFE'S PROGRAMS ARE WELL-RESEARCHED AND REVEAL A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF CZECHOSLOVAK EVENTS.

4. ...AND SOME MINUSES. REF'S PREOCCUPATION WITH REFUTING THE CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA OFTENS GIVES ITS PRESENTATION A PREDOMINANTLY NEGATIVE TONE, AND OCCASIONALLY LEADS IT INTO THE TRAP OF EMULATING THE LOCAL MEDIA'S TACTICS OF EXAGGERATION, CONTENTUOUS SARCASM, AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. WE QUESTION THE USEFULNESS OF DEVOTING RFE'S TIME TO REFUTATION OF SPECIFIC ARTICLES OR BROADCASTS, AND WOULD SUGGEST THAT SUCH PROGRAMS BE GIVEN BROADER THEMES AND BETTER BALANCE.

5. WE NOTE THAT THE TENDENCY TO ELABORATE AT LENGTH ON CERTAIN FACETS OF CZECHOSLOVAK LIFE (PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC SHORTCOMINGS AND THE LACK OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM) HAS NOT BEEN OVERCOME. THE DANGER OF THESE COMMENTARIES IS THAT THE LISTENERS ARE APT TO KNOW FAR MORE ABOUT SUCH SUBJECTS THAN DO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 00864 051316Z

BROADCASTERS.

6. A THIRD CRITICISM WHICH WE FEEL OBLIGED TO MAKE CONCERNS RFE'S EXCESSIVE ATTENTION TO INTRICACIES OF MARXIST DOGMA AND SINS OF LONG-DEAD COMMUNIST LEADERS. IF THE CZECHS AND SLOVAKS ARE EVEN HALF AS BORED BY THESE MONOTONOUS STORIES AS WE ARE, THEY MAY WELL BE DESERTING THEIR RADIOS.

7. SOME SUGGESTIONS. WE WONDER IF RFE COULD BROADEN ITS AUDIENCE BY CREATING A SERIES ON THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY OR BY MORE EMPHASIS ON SPORTS.

8. IN GENERAL, WE SUGGEST THAT RFE CONCENTRATE LESS ON "REFUTATIONS" OF THE HUSAK REGIME'S WORDS AND DEEDS, AND MORE ON PRAGMATIC "ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS" TO PROBLEMS WHICH EACH SOCIETY FACES.

9. AUDIBILITY. RFE IS STILL JAMMED IN PRAGUE.
WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE IN WHICH OTHER
AREAS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IT MAY ALSO BE JAMMED.

10. COMMENT. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT RFE HAS
AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. ITS
LANGUAGE CAPABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL CONDI-
TIONS GIVE IT AN IMMENSE POTENTIAL IN THIS NEWS-
STARVED COUNTRY. WE ALSO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT
THAT POTENTIAL COULD BE BETTER UTILIZED BY TAKING
THE HIGH ROAD WITH A MORE POSITIVE, OBJECTIVE, AND
IMAGINATIVE APPROACH TO PROGRAMMING.
FROWICK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROPAGANDA, SEMIANNUAL REPORTS, RADIO BROADCASTING, RADIO STATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PRAGUE00864
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770118-0248
Format: TEL
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770486/aaaacxit.tel
Line Count: 129
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0118efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 51717
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2893191
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEMIANNUAL REPORT ON RADIO FREE EUROPE OUTPUT
TAGS: PFOR, PROP, CA, US, RFE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0118efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009